

YOUTH INSTRUCTION CLASS

LESSON 5: THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

PART ONE

Introduction

What do you know about the Ten Commandments? Where were they written down? To whom were they first given? Why did God give them?

A NOTE ABOUT NUMBERING THE COMMANDMENTS: The Bible speaks of ten commandments (Ex 34:28; Dt 10:4), but it does not specify which commandment is the first, which commandment is the second, etc. Most Protestant churches call Ex 20:3 the First Commandment and Ex 20:4-5 the Second Commandment. As long as we teach the Ten Commandments according to God's Word, how we number them is not that important.

What God Forbids In the First Commandment

- Copy down the First Commandment with Luther's explanation as it is printed in your Catechism (p. 45):

- In this commandment, God forbids:

_____ Deuteronomy 5:7

_____ Exodus 20:4-5 (107)

- A sin against the First Commandment is called

IDOLATRY

IDOLATRY = Worship of a false god or using a substitute for god
(*Small Catechism*, p. 47)



There is only one God: The triune God. Besides Him, no other "god" exists. But sinful human beings make other gods for themselves. These other gods are known as idols, that is, "imitations." The true God says, "Beware of imitations! Worship me alone."

- From *Catechetical Helps* by Erwin Kurth

We know that the First Commandment is *not* just a *ceremonial law* that was in place until Jesus came, because the New Testament expresses the same will of God even after Christ has come.

1 Jn 5:21 (109)

What Are the Different Kinds Of Idolatry?

1 Kings 18:26-29 So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made. At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal is an example of _____ idolatry.

Other examples of this kind of idolatry:

- The worship of the sun, moon, and stars or any other creation of God; ancestor worship; Satan worship; saint worship (such as praying to Mary); paganism; atheism; Buddhism; Hinduism, etc.
- The Roman Catholic Church claims that their prayers to Mary and other saints are not really worship. But just examine some of the prayers found in "My Catholic Faith," pp. 397, 418-420: "We plead with Mary to obtain for us the graces we shall need ... She cannot be deaf to our petitions to help us attain eternal salvation . . . To Thee I come, O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in Thy mercy hear and answer me . . . Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of mercy; hail, our life, our sweetness, our hope. To thee do we cry. Turn thine eyes of mercy toward us . . . Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."
- Other religions and organizations who do not acknowledge or worship the true God as He is described in the Bible would include: Islam, Judaism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witness, Christian Science, Unitarianism, Jesus Only, all Christ-less or Christ-denying religions, semi-religious organizations such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, religions that do not accept Jesus or the Holy Spirit as God. See **John 5:23** (112) and **1 John 2:23** (113).

Matthew 19:16-22 Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." "Which ones?" the man inquired. Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

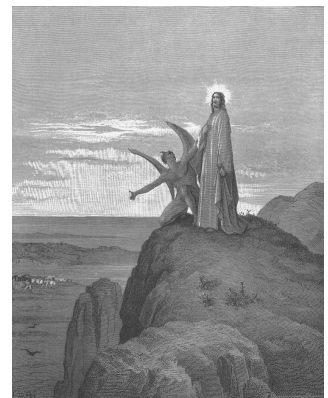
The Rich Young Man is an example of _____ idolatry.

Think about and write down another example of this kind of idolatry:

- 1 John 2:15 (124)
- Jeremiah 17:5 (125)
- "Many a person thinks he has God and everything he needs when he has money and property; in them he trusts and of them he boasts so stubbornly and securely that he cares for no one. Surely such a man also has a god - mammon by name, that is, money and possessions - on which he fixes his whole heart. It is the most common idol on earth" (Martin Luther).
- "So, too, if anyone boasts of great learning, wisdom, power, prestige, family, and honor, and trusts in them, he also has a god, but not the one, true God" (Martin Luther).

Jesus Kept This Commandment

Matthew 4:8-9 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"



Review Questions

1. What is the main difference between the Law and the Gospel?
2. Where is the Law written?
3. What does God forbid in the First Commandment?
4. What is *open* idolatry?
5. What is *secret* idolatry?

Assignment

- Bible Reading Schedule 4 from the book of Luke (Mon-Fri)
- Memorize the First Commandment with Luther's explanation (p. 45)